



# Editorial director appointed by McGoff

John P. McGoff, president and chief executive officer of Panax Corporation, has appointed James R. Whelan as editorial director of the company's newspapers.

At the same time, McGoff said Whelan had been elected a vicepresident of the corporation at the July 25 meeting of the company's Board of Directors.

"We are committed at Panax," McGoff said, "to publishing the finest newspapers of our size in America, newspapers with a strong and vigorous editorial personality. We have conducted a nationwide search, lasting several months, to find the right person to give us the leadership to reach those goals."

"We are confident that Mr. Whelan is that person, because of his record of accomplishment as a reporter, writer, and editor, at the local, national and international levels, because those skills were tempered and broadened by exposure as a business executive and as a publisher, and because of his personal qualities."

McGoff said Whelan, presently president and editor of the Hialeah (Fla.) Publishing Company, would assume his new duties at the Company's East Lansing headquarters on August 1.

He said Whelan's primary responsibilities would center on working with the editors of Panax newspapers in order to develop a better flow of news and ideas among them and to and from the Panax bureaus in Lansing, New York and Washington.

"We have a tremendous and largely-untapped reservoir of talent," McGoff said, "in the persons of the 400 reporters, editors and writers and photo-journalists on our newspapers."

"Harnessing and channeling all that energy and ability, so that stories and ideas are shared as widely as they ought to be, can only enhance all of our papers. In a similar vein, we need more two-way communication between our papers and bureaus."

McGoff said Whelan also would have direct responsibility for developing an overall editorial personality for the group on national and international issues.

"Such a 'personality,'" McGoff said, "would, of course, in no way relieve our local editors of their responsibility to formulate editorial opinions on the full range of issues, nor impinge on their rightful autonomy."

"Yet we do feel that too many publishers and others in positions of trust and responsibility for newspapers have abdicated the one, essential responsibility: to speak clearly, forcefully and forth-

rightly on issues. Instead, too many have retreated timidly to board rooms and cashier's cages, leaving the arena of ideas to syndicated columnists and hired hands.

"We believe in—and will continue to practice—rugged, independent, local journalism. But we also believe in rugged, independent leadership."

McGoff noted that the past few years have been a time of rapid growth for Panax.

"In 1972, just five years ago," he said, "we published eight dailies and 25 weeklies in 3 states. Now, we publish seven dailies and 43 weeklies in Michigan, Illinois, Florida and Washington, D.C."

"During the early years of our growth, we were fortunate to enjoy the expert guidance of Don Hoenshell as our editorial director. Since Don moved on three years ago to become editor of the *Sacramento* (Calif.) *Union* (owned by another sister company controlled by McGoff), we have felt the increasing need for another firm hand to assure that we grow in quality as well as in size and number."

Whelan, 44, comes to Panax after a professional career that began 27 years ago as a copy boy on the *Buffalo* (N.Y.) *Courier-Express*. In the years since, he has climbed through the ranks to just about every level on the journalistic ladder. He also has won numerous honors, including a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard (1966-1967), and the Citation of Excellence of the Overseas Press Club of America.

From the *Courier-Express*, he went to the Buffalo bureau of the United Press International as one of the youngest staff correspondents of the news agency in the country. With two years out for Army service, and one for the Nieman Fellowship, he remained with UPI until 1968, serving in Buffalo, Boston, Providence, New York, Buenos Aires, Caracas and San Juan, as a reporter, editor, news editor, foreign correspondent, bureau manager, country manager and, finally, division manager.

In 1968, he was recruited by International Telephone & Telegraph Company for a newly-created position on the Corporate Relations staff, moving later to line management as Vice President-Operations of ITT Western Hemisphere Directories, a subsidiary with branches throughout Latin America.

He left ITT in 1970 to return to newspapering, as Washington-based Latin America correspondent of the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance. It was there he won the Pulitzer Prize for his award in the category, best reporting on

Latin America, any medium, for 1971.

In 1971, he joined the *Miami* (Fla.) *News* as assistant managing editor, and was promoted to Managing Editor the following year. At the end of 1973, he left that newspaper in a dispute between the editor, a close associate, and the newspaper's owners.

For the next two years, he worked as a free-lance writer and consultant.

In 1976, together with five partners, he acquired a failing, 32-year-old weekly, the *Home News*, and nourished it back to health. Inasmuch as 63% of the 140,000 inhabitants of Hialeah, the community it serves, are of Hispanic origin, the partners later launched a second, bi-lingual publication, the *Hialeah News* *Las Noticias de Hialeah*.